

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. A lid assembly for creating a partial vacuum within a container, the lid assembly comprising:

- a) a seat-portion for sealing connection to the container;
- b) a pump configuration associated with said seat-portion and configured with a pumping element actuated in a reciprocating linear motion to pump gas from within the container to an external atmosphere; and
- c) a rotatable actuating element mechanically associated with said pump configuration such that continuous rotation of said actuating element in a given rotational direction generates said reciprocating linear motion of said pumping element, thereby expelling a quantity of gas from the container to generate at least a partial vacuum.

2. The lid assembly of claim 1, wherein said actuating element substantially circumscribes at least a portion of said pump configuration such that said continuous rotation is about said pump configuration.

3. The lid assembly of claim 2, wherein one of said pumping element and said actuating element includes a longitudinally-wave-like groove, and the other of said pumping element and said actuating element includes at least one pump activation pin configured to engage said wave-like groove, such that during said continuous rotation said activation pin contacts an edge of said longitudinally-wave-like groove, thereby generating said reciprocating linear motion

4. The lid assembly of claim 3, wherein said pumping element is a substantially cylindrical piston element, an outer surface of which is a circumferential wall configured with said groove circumscribing said wall so as to form a single continuous groove; and said actuating element includes said at least one pump activation pin.

5. The lid assembly of claim 1, further including a contents-dispensing mechanism for removing non-gaseous contents from the container while maintaining said at least a partial vacuum.

6. The lid assembly of claim 5, wherein said contents-dispensing mechanism includes a rotatable dispensing element deployed in said seat-portion, said dispensing element configured with a contents receptacle, and said dispensing element rotatable such that said contents receptacle is alternately alignable with a contents inlet, opening into said interior volume, and a contents outlet, opening to said exterior atmosphere, said contents inlet and said contents outlet being spaced apart such that as said contents receptacle alternates between said contents inlet and said contents outlet said contents receptacle passes through a region in which fluid communication between said contents receptacle and one of said contents inlet and said contents outlet is fully interrupted before fluid communication is established with an other of contents inlet and said contents outlet.

7. The lid assembly of claim 1, further including a ratchet mechanism to limit rotation of said actuating element to said given rotational direction.

8. The lid assembly of claim 1, further including a lid-removal mechanism configured to selectively limit rotation of said actuating-ring in relation to said seat-portion.

9. The lid assembly of claim 8, wherein said lid-removal mechanism is engaged by displacing said actuating element a pre-limited distance in a direction longitudinally away from the container and displacing at least a portion of said actuating element inward toward said seat-portion so as to engage complementary teeth configured in both the actuating element and said seat-portion.

10. The lid assembly of claim 1, further including a vacuum indicator.

11. The lid assembly of claim 10, wherein said vacuum indicator is configured as a passage with at least one opening to said interior volume of the container and at least one opening to said exterior atmosphere, said opening to said exterior atmosphere being closed by a vacuum indicating element that is displaceable between two different states so as to indicate vacuum and non-vacuum states within said interior of the container.

12. The lid assembly of claim 11, wherein said vacuum indicating element is configured from resilient material biased to a first state, so as to indicate said non-vacuum state, and displaceable to a second state, so as to indicate said vacuum state.

13. The lid assembly of claim 1, where said pump configuration includes at least one one-way inlet valve and at least one one-way outlet valve.

14. The lid assembly of claim 13, further including a filter element associated with said one one-way inlet valve.

15. (withdrawn)

16. (withdrawn)

17. (withdrawn)

18. (withdrawn)